

Special Tourism Packages for NE Region

672. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in North East Time dated 19th January, 2001 under the heading "Tourism Sector Needs Exposure Globally";

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether special tourism packages are being inaugurated shortly for Arunachal Pradesh and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether similar packages will be developed for other States in the North East region including Assam in order to boost tourism in the North East Region; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government is aware of the need for greater exposure for the North East and accordingly special emphasis is laid on the promotion and publicity of this region.

(c) Tour packages are developed and marketed by Tour Operators and Travel Agents.

(d) The Government of India Tourist Offices overseas promote tourist places in the country including the North East States. The special initiative taken to promote the North East Region include:—

1. Allocation on free booth to North Eastern States in ITB Berlin and WTM, London.
2. Continuous financial assistance for promotion of fairs & festivals and printing of publicity material to North Eastern States.
3. Production of video films of tourist attractions of North Eastern States by the Department of Tourism.
4. Production of CD-ROM and a Brochure on tourist attractions

on North Eastern States highlighting tourism products has been brought out by the Department of Tourism.

5. 10% allocation of the overall budget of the Department of Tourism for the North Eastern Region.

(c) Does not arise.

Study on safety of Mullapperiyar Dam

673. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the epicenter of the recent earthquake in Kerala is very close to Mullapperiyar Dam;

(b) whether Government propose to conduct a detailed study on the safety of the Years long old Dam in view of the frequent earthquake in that locality;

(c) whether Government would consider to constitute a panel of scientists to evolve a scientific opinion in this matter; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) The epicenter of recent earthquakes in Kerala are about 50 kms from Mullaperiyar dam.

(b) to (d) As per the inspection conducted by the project authorities following the International guidelines, no damage has been reported due to recent earthquakes. At present, there is no proposal to constitute a panel of scientists to conduct any detailed study.

Closure of canals in Orissa

674. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that closure of several canals in Orissa is adversely affecting the Rabi irrigation and aggravating the drought situation;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this is even causing a drinking water problem in several districts of State; and